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THE

G O S P E L

CONTRASTED WITH ITS

C O U N T E R F E I T S.

BEING A REPRINT OF AN ARTICLE ON

WILBERFORCE'S OXFORD SERMONS,

FROM

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW

FOR

JANUARY 1840.

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THE GOSPEL

CONTRASTED WITH ITS COUNTERFEITS.

ART. IV.—*Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, in St. Mary's Church, in the years 1837–8–9.*

By the Rev. SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M. A., Rector of Brightstone, Isle of Wight. London: James Burns, 1839.

‘THOUGH we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.’ It was thus that the Apostle Paul denounced, in language which modern liberality taxes as uncharitable, the attempts of some false teachers among the Galatians to mix up ‘the truth of the gospel’ with Jewish ceremonies. Once and again throughout the same Epistle, he employs the same strong language of condemnation. He accuses these men of wholly subverting and destroying the gospel; and denies to their doctrine the very name of gospel, as if it were pollution and profanity to call such a system of mingled truth and falsehood by such a sacred name. Yet these teachers did not, in words, deny the gospel of Christ. They professed to be preachers of Christ as well as Paul. They did not leave out Christ’s atonement in declaring the gospel. But then, they were for adding something of their own to the doctrine of Christ. They taught that the gospel was insufficient of itself to accomplish the mighty ends which Paul had declared to be its design. They said, ‘except ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.’ They taught, that some qualification was previously necessary before a man could be in a condition for being benefited by Christ; that Christ’s work, and Christ’s gospel, however precious, were not available to all sinners, *as sinners*, but only to those who, by keeping the law of Moses, had contrived to raise themselves above the vulgar class of mere common undeserving sinners, and gain admission among a better and more respectable sort than aliens and idolaters. The gospel, they said, was no doubt a glorious gospel, but then, it was for a privileged class, not for the ceremonially unclean. They taught, in short, that something more was necessary to recommend them to God than what Christ has done—that

before a sinner could have peace of conscience or confidence towards God, he must not merely know what Christ has done, but do something himself to bring himself within the reach of the gospel. According to them, the work of Christ went a certain length in propitiating God—in bringing God near to sinners, but the sinner must do the rest himself, by circumcision, sacrifice, prayer, or such like efforts of his own.

Every one who has any idea of what the gospel is, knows that this is a clear, and all but a *direct* denial of its very essence. And no one who has really felt the preciousness of a free and finished salvation, will wonder in the least at the unmeasured condemnation which the Apostle pours upon all such self-righteousness. Any one, then, whether at Galatia, or Rome, or Oxford, who would teach us, that any thing is to be done or endeavoured *by us* as the ground of our acceptance with God, denies the ‘truth of the gospel’ which the Apostle laboured so strenuously to preserve uncorrupted. The Apostles taught, that the ground of a sinner’s acceptance is already complete: independent altogether of any thing to be done or felt by him. They set before men, Christ’s finished and accepted work as the only recommendation to God—the only ground of confidence towards God. What they made known regarding Jesus and the resurrection, was something which, as soon as it was understood, relieved the guilty conscience and drew the soul to God. The sinner did not need to set about obtaining some personal qualification in order to get the benefit of this work. He was not told to labour, and pray, and use means, in order that, by thus raising himself above the common level of his fellow-sinners, he might cast the balance in his favour, and draw towards himself the benefits and comforts of the great salvation which, however free in themselves, he conceived had no friendly bearing towards him individually, until he could, by a certain amount of work, or prayer, or feeling, create a difference in his own favour. This would have been a total subversion of the gospel. For it is clear, that if the gospel has left any thing for us to do before we are in a condition to partake of its benefits—then, to that extent at least, it has left us to find our own way of propitiating God. We owed God an hundred talents; of these (according to this way) Christ has paid ninety-nine; but, as for the remaining one, he has left us to make it up between our works, our forms, our prayers, or our feelings! The ‘truth of the gospel’ is

surely a different thing from this. It is not an incongruous mixture of grace and merit. It is *all* of grace. It tells us of a work done in behalf of sinners, in which God is well pleased; with which he is, in all respects, most fully satisfied—so satisfied, that he is no longer under any necessity of visiting transgression on the head of the transgressor; so satisfied, that he is willing to treat with the guiltiest criminal on earth; so satisfied, that any sinner, the moment he hears the tidings of what has been done, may return to God, and, resting on the sure testimony, may enter ‘into the holiest’ without dread, and stand before his offended Father in the assured confidence of a forgiven child.

If any thing more is necessary for the pardon and salvation of the guiltiest sinner upon earth, than the knowledge of what Christ has done for the putting away of sin, then His work has not accomplished the end designed. If any thing more is necessary to bring peace to the most troubled conscience, than the simple *truth* of the gospel, then Christ’s blood does not speak better things than the blood of Abel. If it be necessary to obtain certain pre-requisites which are not at this moment to be found in every sinner *as such*; if any other qualification be needful in the case of *any sinner* than what the thief had upon the cross, or Paul on his way to Damascus, or the woman in whom dwelt the seven devils, then is our condition as utterly hopeless as if no Saviour had ever died. In justifying a sinner, God has no respect to any man as being better than another. All men, decent or profligate, stand, in this matter, precisely upon the same level. All sins, open or secret, great or small, *before or after baptism*,* are treated, *in respect of pardon*, in exactly the same way. There is no more obstacle in the way of the worst than in the way of the best. There is no more difficulty in washing away sins of the deepest than of the lightest dye.

* We shall, in a little, speak of this daring blasphemy, by which Professor Pusey and the other adopted children of the Mother of harlots, deny the sufficiency of Christ’s death, maintaining that, while lesser sins, committed before baptism, are washed away by Christ’s blood, yet blacker sins, committed after baptism, require the addition of the sinner’s prayers and fastings; and even then, the crimson can never be washed wholly white!!! The blood of the cross, is sufficient for smaller sins, but for greater sins—sins thought to be all but unpardonable—the sinner must look to his own tears for *them*!!!

In vain shall any man—let him be the most amiable or religious upon earth—expect to find in himself, or about himself, any reason why God should be well-pleased with him—or why God should be better-pleased with him than with the worst of his fellow-sinners. ‘There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.’ In vain shall he labour by his prayers or tears to create a certain something in himself which may furnish him with a reason for expecting that God should look upon him with a more favourable eye than on the common class of sinners. In vain shall he pray for grace to enable him to find or to create any such a reason. In vain shall he expect to hear one word more from God to warrant or encourage him to draw near to Him, than just that He is well-pleased in his beloved Son—well-pleased for his righteousness’ sake. He who is persuaded that Christ has, by the work he finished on the cross, done enough to procure the divine good pleasure for the guiltiest sinner upon earth, loves that truth, sees in it all that he needs or can possibly desire, and rests upon it at once as upon a rock which nothing can shake. He that is not satisfied with this, is just saying that that which satisfies God is not enough to satisfy him. He is dissatisfied with that in which God delights, and on which he rests with unutterable complacency. If what satisfies God is not enough to satisfy the guiltiest of mankind, then all hope of peace must be for ever at an end. If any thing in us, any thing done by us, any thing apart from what Christ has already done, be needed to relieve our burdened consciences, or effect reconciliation between God and us—then relief and reconciliation are alike unattainable.

‘This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;’* and ‘we know that his commandment is life everlasting.’† In these passages, we are plainly taught, not that we can do any thing to obtain life, but that we are to live by what Christ has already done. It is a commandment not enjoining on us some new duty which is to be rewarded by life, but a commandment conferring life, and conveying life by the knowledge which it brings. For as it is in the fulness of Christ that we have life and

peace, so it is by the knowledge of this fulness that our souls are relieved, and life and peace poured in. Scripture always speaks of the 'knowledge of the truth,' as being enough to give us peace and life—enough to sanctify and save. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' It is then simply what we know about Christ that gives us peace and rest. It is not our knowledge of Christ *and something else*,—something in ourselves, that relieves us; it is just the knowledge of Christ. It is the *truth* that we know, and not our act of knowing it, that purifies and sanctifies, just as it is the food we eat, and not our own act of eating it, that nourishes the body.

We have made these remarks upon the real nature of the gospel, because we could not properly expose the sad, but most subtle errors with which these sermons of Mr. Wilberforce are full, without first exhibiting something of that truth with which they stand in such specious, yet most striking contrast. We were unwilling also, merely to condemn the discourses summarily, as conveying most pernicious error, without exhibiting the opposite truth to our readers;—and to Mr. Wilberforce, if it be conceivable that he would read what we have written, or allow it to be possible that he may gather some stray hints of truth from pages such as ours. We believe him to be very far from the simplicity of the gospel. We think that he is doing the same as those teachers, whom Paul condemns, did at Galatia, preaching 'another gospel'—a gospel which, while making much use of the name of Christ, does not make him its alpha and omega, its beginning and its ending,—its 'all in all.' It is not the knowledge of Christ alone, that, according to him, is to give the sinner peace; it is the knowledge of Christ, coupled with something in ourselves, or done by ourselves. Our grand charge against him then is, that he does not preach Christ in simplicity, but with such appendages and conditions as to make us feel that he is speaking of Moses rather than of Christ. We hear much of what the sinner has *to do* in order to get sin remitted—little of what Christ *has done*. We are told much of the repentance which he has to pass through,—little, if any thing, of simply believing 'the glad tidings of great joy.' We are led to conclude, from these discourses, not that Christ has once and for ever done *every thing* to secure for us the good pleasure of God,

but that much remains for the sinner still to do in propitiating God. The one offering of Christ is not of itself sufficient, but must be helped out by our repentance and prayers ! Nay, for the sinner *after baptism*, nothing remains but a dismal process of penance, which has all the horrors of purgatory, without its supposed efficacy in completely cleansing the soul.

But let us place before our readers a few statements of Mr. Wilberforce's in order to make good our charge. At the same time, it must not be supposed that these statements contain the whole burden of our accusation. Besides actual errors, the statements of the great truths of the gospel are meagre and defective. No anxious soul would ever find in his pages a guide to the Saviour. The simple gospel is not brought out at all. There are no glad tidings here,—save such as are clogged with such conditions as to make them such only to the better sort of sinners, not to the chief of sinners, such as Paul, or the thief upon the cross. The burden of *his* preaching is certainly not that of his master's, who sums up the end of his mission in such words as these.—‘I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’ How strange does the following remark appear. Speaking of sin, or, as he calls it, ‘moral evil,’ he tells us, that ‘in God's ordinary dealings with his people, it is not at once remitted on repentance ! !’ (P. 30.) Without dwelling upon the use of the word repentance for faith, which occurs frequently ; we just ask, does the author mean to say, that God keeps the soul in suspense, that is, in torture, for some indefinite time after he has repented ? Miserable doctrine ! Miserable substitute for the everlasting gospel ! Can torture make a sinner holy, or prepare him for receiving the favour of God ? Why not at once give us the Indian swinging-hook or the Popish scourge ? Can any misapprehension of the blessed gospel be greater than this ? Is it not the very design of its precious news to *put us out of suspense at once* in the matter of remission and acceptance, that being forgiven much, we may love much ? Can a sinner really repent with godly sorrow, or love God, or become holy, until *he has found remission* ? Is not the free remission which the gospel sets before us, the *first step to repentance, holiness, and love* ? Till we have found peace with God, till we are living in conscious peace and reconciliation with Him, we have not even begun a holy life. The commencement of holiness is a *found* remission and a *felt* peace.

We have noted several similar expressions throughout the volume, but we need not quote them. They occur frequently; and the declarations which the author sometimes makes of God's mercy to the *repenting* sinner, (not the *believing* sinner, it would seem) are a poor feeble counteractive of the deadly poison which leavens his whole preaching. We give one extract from the first sermon, from which our readers may gather something of the leaven which pervades them all.

"To take one case more, if you could be sure of escaping at the last, yet still there is nothing to encourage you in sin. For even where it has pleased God, by the mighty powers of grace stored up for penitents within His Church, to heal in great measure this early wound, who can estimate aright either the pain of the process, or the incompleteness of the recovery? It is not by less than a furnace-heat that such dross is purged away, and the redeemed soul which has communed willingly with sin cleansed again from its pollution. It is, at best, by a sore struggle that the consequences of sinful habits must be subdued: 'This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting.' How often against such an one, in his secret strife with the enemy, do long-past and perhaps forgotten transgressions spring up again in present temptations! How often, even in the process of recovery, do hard, ambitious, unchaste, or unbelieving thoughts well out from his heart, and trouble the time of meditation or the hour of prayer! With what a weary earnestness does he thirst for the purity and simplicity of childhood, when evil thoughts were as yet strange to his heart, and God, and heaven, and grace, were, without any struggle, invisible realities! Though, of God's great mercy, his sun shines out again, and the stormy sky is clearing over him, how far is he even yet from the freshness of a holy morning; how painful, yet how just a sentence is it upon many penitent souls, that they are thus 'made to possess the iniquities of their youth!'

'So far, indeed, from the example of these recovered souls affording ground to any for continuing in sin, the very language of encouragement, in which alone we can address them, is a testimony to the bitterness of its consequences. The very promises of help, and all the gracious messages which God has stored up in His Church to support and cheer such returning sinners, even these have a double sound; and while they are as balm to them, they should be a wholesome terror unto you. We can, indeed, tell them not to despair; we can say, that even for them there is a healing power in God's grace: but we cannot promise them a speedy deliverance from that bitter fruit of their own ways with which they now are filled; we must rather bid them bear their burden patiently, nor fret against God's way of healing them, but take up the bitter cross of present suffering, meekly acknowledging that it is indeed a fearful thing to have polluted a soul which God created holy. Surely the knowledge of this difficult and painful cure cannot encourage us to trifle with the same

disease. And even, after all, they are commonly restored to a condition far below that to which they might have once attained. The whole analogy of nature teaches us, that even if the vital powers struggle on through early sickness into the health of maturer years, yet that they still bear in their diminished power and energy the marks of former conflict; and so is it in spiritual growth. Few of the most encouraging examples in God's word, and but one of the bright lights of Christian antiquity, give us reason to expect in such recovered souls the *perfect* measure of simplicity or peace." Pp. 21—24.

All this reads well enough as a piece of refined heathenism, but it breathes nothing of the gospel. Nor could any one who really understands what the gospel means, have written such paragraphs. Their spirit is thoroughly Popish. It makes a spirit of bondage necessary as a pre-requisite to complete restoration. It makes penitence and prayer, &c., indispensable *co-efficients* to the work of Christ. And even with all these together, repentance, prayer, watching, fasting, and the blood of Christ superadded,—restoration must be a work of considerable time! To keep the sinner in suspense, that is, mental torture, seems the Oxford, as it was the Popish panacea, for the diseases of the soul. And if it be true that the gospel remedy is just the very opposite,—free and instantaneous remission,—full and perfect reconciliation, as soon as the soul believes the faithful saying,—then light and darkness are not more hostile to each other than these two creeds. The Oxford way to make men holy is to keep them in suspense; the gospel way to make them holy is to put them at once out of all suspense, by the *perfect reconciliation* between the soul and God, which follows upon believing the divine testimony regarding the Son of God. Those who remember Luther's experience, will recollect that this was the very point on which turned his great struggle of soul. Upon this the whole tenor of his after life hinged. But the self-righteous pride of man would fain return to bondage rather than give up the fond idea of doing something for his own acceptance with God. Hence the teaching of the Puseyite sect is just the inculcation of Popish penance without its external flagellations,—nay, of Popish purgatory, without its material flames. If Mr. Wilberforce and his sect be right, then it is plain, that under the old dispensation of ceremonial bondage, there was a freer gospel preached than under the new covenant of adopting grace and spiritual liberty. The old had, if not better pro-

mises, at least promises more free and unfettered than the new.

Happy Israel ! Thou only sawest the day of Christ afar off, yet thy God said to thee, ‘ Come now and let us reason together ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ Thy God thus spake to thee when sunk to the very depths of rebellion, backsliding, and apostacy,—when comparing thee to Sodom and Gomorrah. Happy Israel ! what promises, what liberty were thine ! Unhappy *we* ! No such blessed privilege is ours, if we are to believe some who call themselves ministers of Christ. No full remission, no perfect restoration, for us ; no turning of the scarlet to the snow, the crimson to wool ! No ; but a less degree of holiness,—imperfect restoration,—dubious reconciliation,—and long suspense ! Happy Israel ! If this be so, how we long for thy times of grace and liberty again ! If thine were beggarly elements, what must ours be ! But no : though men assuming the name and garb of ministers of Christ,—claiming the sole prerogative of apostolical descent,—should preach such a gospel as many are now doing, with the united voice of antiquity to back them,—we reject it with abhorrence, as a denial of the efficacy of that blood, which as soon as sprinkled on the guilty conscience, *at once, perfectly and for ever cleanses from all sin.*

Of course, as expositions of the gospel, we set aside these discourses of Mr. Wilberforce as we would the sermons of Hugo de Prato Florido, Francis de Sales, or any such writer of the days of darkness. And to know the gospel, we would no more send men to this volume than to Thomas à Kempis, whose work seems so popular in our day, though full of self-righteous mysticism. Nevertheless, Mr. Wilberforce writes forcibly and ably. There is much thought, and some eloquence in his sermons. But, alas ! the simplicity of the gospel is not there. No man, from his book, would find an answer to the question, ‘ What shall I do to be saved ?’

But while we thus charge Mr. Wilberforce and the men of that school with preaching ‘ another gospel,’ and of making void the work of Christ, we cannot help, at the same time, acknowledging, that this self-righteous leaven has spread itself beyond their circle, and in another shape, may often be found among men who call themselves evangelical, and who feel indignant at being named in connection with

the Puseyites, or accused of preaching any thing but the gospel of Christ. Nevertheless, feeling how much **obscurity** is cast upon the pure gospel, and how much souls are bewildered by a sort of preaching which aims at being *evangelical*, we cannot lose this opportunity of adverting to this most important point in a few concluding sentences. We have no name wherewith to designate the class of writers and preachers to which we allude, nor is it easy to give one, for the perversions of the gospel are so manifold, that we could not easily single out a name which might include them all. Let us, however, describe them,—and in describing them, we trust our readers will see that in speaking of them as another gospel, we are not overstating the subject, or magnifying the extent of the error. In general, their tendency may be said to be to place something between the sinner and Christ, to give men the idea that they, on their part, have something to do or to act before they are warranted to avail themselves of Christ's work. These writers or preachers, give such prominence to, and lay such stress upon the *actings* of our own minds, in reference to the truth, as to give the impression that these actings have, if not a *meritorious* value, at least such a value as draws upon us God's favourable regards. They make these actings of our own to be our recommendation before God. We do not say they make them our whole grounds of acceptance, but they do make them our recommendation. And thus a sinner is led to suppose, that he is to come to God, recommended by his faith, or his convictions, or his repentance. It is upon the difference created by these actings or feelings, between him and the common mass of mankind, that he is taught to rest his hope of personal acceptance; and it is upon the consciousness of this difference, that he is taught to rest his peace and joy.

Any one who leads others to suppose that their own act of believing is to be the source of their comfort, or who leads them so to mix up that act of theirs with the thing believed, as that they shall do the work between them, preaches another gospel. And yet how often is this the case, even with those who are called *evangelical*! They so confound the *act* of faith with the *object* of faith, giving such prominence to the former, which Scripture never does, and dwelling so little upon the latter, which the word of God makes all in all, that the sinner is utterly perplexed. They

give the sinner so much to do in exerting acts of faith, or being exercised with his own feelings, that the object is lost sight of; and Christ himself becomes useful only in so far as we are able to put forth proper acts of faith. They so represent the gospel, as to make a man infer that it is not the *thing known* that is to give him peace, but some peculiar way or art of knowing it, which they are at considerable trouble to describe. Under the preaching of the apostles, the first and only question that arose in the minds of their hearers was,—is all this really *true*? All they sought for was for evidence that what they declared was true. And this evidence the apostles produced in the miracles which they wrought, by which they gave proof that they were true witnesses, approved of God. Whenever their hearers were persuaded that it was true, then ‘they went upon their way rejoicing.’ They needed nothing more to relieve their minds than the *truth* which they heard,—the simple truth regarding Jesus and the resurrection, altogether apart from any actings, or exertions, or exercises of their own. It was what they knew and heard about Christ that gave them peace, not what they were endeavouring to do, in order (as it is called) to *act faith* upon what they had heard. Under the teaching or preaching of many amongst ourselves, the question that arises in the hearer’s mind is not, ‘are these glad tidings really true,—has God in very deed made his Son a propitiation for sin?’ but how am I to *act faith* upon these tidings, so as to extract from them their hidden benefits, which are only to be wrung out by some great exertion on our part, called the acting of faith, or the closing with Christ. The difference between these two is obvious. The feeling in the latter case is purely a self-righteous one; as much so as if, instead of saying, how shall I act faith upon Christ? it had been said, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life? We do not know a better illustration of the difference, the total, irreconcilable difference, between these two kinds of teaching, and these two kinds of feeling, than the brief narrative commonly published in the shape of a tract called *Poor Joseph*. It is a tract worth a thousand, as an exemplification of the pure gospel, and as an exhibition of the self-righteous system of evangelical mysticism,—a mysticism somewhat more plausible, but just about as pernicious as that taught at Oxford. We need do nothing more than just extract the following brief paragraph. ‘ His

constant language was, “ Joseph is the chief of sinners ; but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and Joseph loves him for this.” His neighbours who came to see him, wondered on hearing him always dwell on this and only this. Some of the religious sort* addressed him in the following manner : ‘ But what say you of your own heart, Joseph ? is there no token for good about it ? no saving change there ? have you closed with Christ by acting faith upon him ? ’ ‘ Ah, no,’ said he, ‘ Joseph can act nothing, Joseph has nothing to say for himself but that he is the chief of sinners, yet seeing that it is a faithful saying that Jesus, who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, why may not Joseph after all be saved.’ This narrative needs no comment. He must be blind, indeed, who does not see in it the contrast between the two systems,—between the simple gospel in which the dying man rejoiced, and the evangelical mysticism with which the ‘ religious sort’ were endeavouring to perplex his peaceful soul. To make a Saviour of our faith, is as rank Arminianism as to make a Saviour of our works.

A sinner’s peace flows from the *truth* he believes, not from his act of believing it—just as our light flows from the sun, and not from our act of opening the eye, or from our consciousness that it is open. Many seem to consider faith as a sort of condition or qualification, upon the fulfilment of which, a man becomes entitled to salvation and eternal life. They look upon these as rewards of faith—marks of God’s approbation for our having gone through a certain exercise of mind or process of feeling. In this way, under the name of the gospel, and in the very language of orthodoxy, a system of pure self-righteousness is taught. We need not say how unlike this is to the Apostolical gospel—as unlike it as the creed of Saul of Tarsus was to the creed of Paul the Apostle.

* *Religious sort !* they might be religious, but if so, it was in spite of their creed. The questions these men put to the poor dying idiot, were the questions of the Pharisee, who is as proud of his *actions of faith* as the papist is of his penances, or the Puseyite of his baptism. What would a parent, whose heart had been made glad at the news of the unexpected recovery of a dying child, say to some idle busy-body, who, on witnessing his joy, should check him midway with the grand question, ‘ but are you sure you have properly acted faith on these news about your child ? ’ He would ask if the man was sober.

About the *subject* of faith, the Apostles said much; about the mental act of faith they never speak at all, far less do they magnify it into a mighty and meritorious something, upon the proper performance of which God's favour depends. They speak as reasonable men, who knew that the whole efficacy of faith rests, not on the nature or importance of the act, but upon the nature and importance of its object. Hence the question among them in those times, was never the self-righteous one, 'have I acted faith aright?' but, 'has Christ really died and risen again?'

Our limits do not allow us to dilate upon this point so fully as the momentous nature of the subject demands. We trust we have said enough to shew something of the difference between the two systems—the pure and the perverted gospel—the evangelical doctrine of the Apostles, and that falsely so called, which has usurped the name in our day, as indeed it has done before. In Luther, and most of the Reformation divines, we have noble specimens of the pure Apostolical gospel.* Subsequent controversies in succeeding ages tended much to mar and mystify the truth; and an attentive reader will observe a manifest difference between the simple statements of Luther, and the complicated subtleties of Baxter. Luther fixes our eye at once upon the cross with undivided gaze. Baxter distracts our mind by his tedious anatomy of the spiritual eye. In another generation the evil grew worse—the poison spread. In our own day it still works—most subtilely and speciously, but with pernicious success. It eats out the kernel of the gospel, and leaves us but the empty shell!

There may be some who do not see the greatness of the contrast between the two gospels. To us the contrast appears wide and important in the extreme. In the complex mystical way in which the gospel is often preached, a thousand obstacles are raised up between the sinner and Christ. A long and dreary distance is placed between him and peace. Instead of being directed to the simple truth—to the outward *facts* of the gospel, which are the fountains of a sinner's peace—his whole attention is turned to the performance of certain acts of mind, upon the proper accomplishment of

* See that small but most precious book, "Jehovah Zidkenu," the watchword of the Reformers," by Sander of Prussia.

which, he is told, his peace depends. This, of course, throws him off to an immeasurable distance from the Saviour, and he might as well have been told at once to fulfil the whole law. He is told, no doubt, that he is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that he may be saved. But then, it is added, that as he cannot believe of himself, he must go and use the means, and pray, and labour, and strive, &c. in order to get up this strange exercise of mind called the acting of faith; or rather, in order to persuade God to give him this meritorious power. As if any man could really pray or labour aright before he had believed; or, as if these other exercises were easier than to believe what he knows to be true! Or, as if any man could pray for the Holy Spirit before he had believed the truth, of which He is the Spirit! The *first* thing God calls on a sinner to do, and that just *as a sinner*, is to believe what he has made known regarding his Son Jesus; and for the end of making him believe it, He shews him, (not how he may contrive to put forth the act of faith,) but how *true* the thing is which He calls him to believe.

But we must close. These remarks, or rather hints, must suffice. If we shall succeed in setting any a-thinking upon this momentous point, we shall have done much. Let our readers ponder the matter. Let them learn to separate the object from the act of faith. Let them learn to distinguish the work of Christ from the work of the Spirit, and to beware of mixing them up together. It is the former, not the latter, that contains the gospel. Let them beware of supposing, that any actings of ours are to be the source of blessing. Let them remember, that it is the *truth*—the objective truth, that is the food of our souls and the fountain of our joy. ‘This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’

BELIEVE AND LIVE.

"**I SAY THE TRUTH, WHY DO YE NOT BELIEVE ME?**"—Jo. viii. 46.

IN these simple words our Lord appeals to the *truth* of what he was saying as the ground upon which he expected to be *believed*. By this he shows us that the *truth* of a thing is the real and sole ground of *faith*. Our only reason for believing a thing is, that we think it to be *true*, and our only reason for not believing a thing is, that we do *not* think it *true*. If we see it to be *true*, we cannot help believing it; and if what is *true* be also *good*, we cannot help being made glad by it.

Faith, then, is just receiving as *true* what God declares to be so, and unbelief is *not* receiving as *true* what he declares to be so. Saving faith is the believing that as *true* which God has made known for our salvation. Christ and his work are the things which God has revealed for salvation, and therefore saving faith is just believing to be *true* what God has told us regarding Christ and his work.

In order, then, to faith in God's word, the only question that arises is—"Is this word perfectly *true*?" In order to faith in Christ, the only question is—"Is all that God has told us about Christ perfectly *true*?" If we are satisfied that it is *true*, then straightway we *believe*; nay, we cannot but believe. If we do not believe, it must just be because we are not satisfied that what is told us is really *true*. For if we see it to be perfectly *true*, then we believe it, and believing it we have peace with God. Our minds are set at rest.

But here many will say—"Oh, we believe all that God has told us about Christ, but we don't *feel* it; it has no effect upon us." Now I ask—Are you sure that you are believing the *very thing that God has declared regarding Christ*, or only something else which seems very like it? Are you not saying—"All this is *true*, no doubt; but it is not *true to me* till I experience some change within, which

will warrant me in believing that it is true to *me*." If this be what you are saying, then it is plain that you are *not* believing the testimony of God concerning Christ, but some other thing. God's testimony is something which is true, whether you believe it or not—whether you are conscious of any change or not. If, then, you are saying that however true the *facts* of Christ's death and resurrection may be, yet these things are nothing to you personally until you are conscious of some inward change, then you are *not* believing the truth of God. You are denying God's testimony—you are believing only a part of it, and thereby, in reality, denying it all. You are making God a liar.¹ And, lastly, you are putting aside the very instrument which is to produce the change you so much desire—I mean *the truth* regarding Christ and his work, which God has declared to you, that, by believing it, you may be renewed and sanctified. Remember, God never says, here is a testimony which is true to you as soon as you have been regenerated. No; that would be no testimony at all; that would be no gospel at all. He says, here is a testimony which is true to you, whether you receive or reject it: here is a testimony, by believing which you are to be renewed and sanctified.—(2 Thess. ii. 13.)

You say, that though the testimony is most true, and though it is "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance," yet it does not exactly suit you, for you are one of those who *cannot feel*. In answer to this, I say that it is most suitable for you, for *it provides for your want of feeling*. It does so, for it tells you of one who can give you all the feeling you want—"of Him who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to *give* repentance." It does so, for it sets before you the very truth most fitted to make you feel. God says to you, believe what I have made known to you concerning my Son. You reply, I do not *feel*. Well, but *believe*, in order that you may *feel*. You never can feel until you believe. It is the *truth* regarding Jesus and his finished work that produces feeling in the soul. You want faith, you say. How then do you think to obtain it? Not by some prodigious exertion of mind to grasp the truth; for faith is the simple and natural impression which *truth, as truth*, makes upon the mind. You think, then, perhaps, that you must just *wait* till

this new principle starts up within you, and then you will be able to exercise faith on Christ. When this is done, then you suppose your faith will bring you life. Now, herein you err; for it is not faith that *causes* life—it is the *truth* which does this; it is the truth which produces both faith and life. It is not your own *act* of believing that is the source of life; it is the thing which you believe—viz. the gospel. The truth which the gospel makes known is the source of faith, and hope, and life. You must, therefore, look out from yourself for the *truth*, not inwardly upon yourself for faith, in order to be enabled to believe. Hear, then, what the gospel says to you, and thus you will get faith, and hope, and life, and peace, and everything you need.—(Isaiah lv. 3.)

God says to you—to every sinner—Believe my word, and you shall have everything. You say—No; give me first some inward change of heart as a personal pledge that this word is true to me, and then I will believe it. God says—What! is not my word *true*? Can any inward pledge make it more so? Is it not insulting me to ask for anything more than my simple declaration? To wait for feeling before you will believe, is both to question my veracity and to reverse my order of procedure. Reader, mark this! God says, *believe* and then you will *feel*. You say, I must feel before I can believe. Do you say—How can I believe if I do not feel? Rather say—How can I feel if I do not believe?¹ Oh that I could persuade you and every weary sinner at once to throw yourselves upon the simple truth and testimony of God, in spite of all your want of feeling. Oh that I could bring you at once to say,—“Well, it *is* all *true*, most certainly and entirely *true*!”² The whole work is done. It is finished.³ The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.⁴ It is true I am not actually forgiven until I believe; but provision, full provision, has been made for my forgiveness, for my peace, for my salvation. If I believe

¹ “Faith must first go before, and then feeling will follow. . . . Though you do not feel as you would, yet doubt not, but hope beyond all hope, as Abraham did; for always, as I said, faith goeth before feeling. As certain as God is Almighty; as certain as God is merciful; as certain as God is true; as certain as Jesus Christ was crucified, is risen, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, so certain ought you to be that God is your Father.”—*Becon, one of the Reformers.*

² Jo. xix. 35; xxi. 24. ³ Jo. xvii. 4; xix. 30. Heb. x. 10, 12, 14.

⁴ Is. liii. 5, 6. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

this, then I have them all. And is it not all true? What, then, *can* keep me from believing it? I do not feel, indeed, as I ought to do; but shall I add to the guilt of not feeling, the guilt of not believing too? Whether I feel it or not, the thing is *true*; and it is the *truth* of the thing, not my feeling it, that is the ground of forgiveness; and then the only way of feeling it is to believe it, for how can I feel a thing which I do not first believe?"

It is upon this point that God's controversy with the sinner turns. And this He will not give up. The sinner must be brought to see that the *very first* thing he is to do is to receive God's testimony concerning his Son as *true*, and receiving it as true to go to God in confidence as to a father. This *one point* God disputes with the sinner; and to bring him to this point, he allows him to go on groping in darkness, sometimes for years. This may seem a small point to many, and they may wonder why a sinner should be kept so long in darkness for this sole reason. It may seem a small matter to many, but it is not so. God's honour is involved in it. The veracity of his word and character is involved in it. The truth and freeness of the gospel are involved in it. There is as much self-righteousness, and as great a denial of the gospel in waiting for so much feeling, as in waiting for so many good deeds. Peace gotten in such a way would be at the expense of God's truthfulness, and by a denial of the sufficiency and perfection of the Saviour's work.

Poor sinner! who hast so long sought peace in vain, think of this! This is God's controversy with you. He asks you to *believe*, and you *will not*. You so far assent to the testimony, but you deny its bearing upon yourself. This is direct unbelief. This is making God a liar. And hence he disputes the point with you. You must believe his whole testimony, else you can no more get peace and pardon from it than devils can. *They*, of course, believe that what has been said concerning Christ is true. But this brings neither pardon nor peace to them. Why? Because they know that this testimony has no bearing upon *their* lost estate, and wears no kindly aspect to *them*. You must see that you, as a sinner, have an interest in that testimony. It has a most blessed bearing upon you. The devils believe the work of Christ and remain unblest, for they know they are *excluded* from its benefits. You believe it, and are blest, because you know that you are *included* in that glorious work. Poor sinner! there is absolutely nothing between you and peace!

It is at your very door.¹ Yet there is but one way to it; and that way is just the very one which you are so obstinately refusing to enter—believing the record that God has given you of his Son, that in Him *you have* eternal life. You are seeking the way to the kingdom. God says, there is the gate—it is open—open to *you*—to you *as you are*—enter in! You hasten forward, but forgetting or mistaking the directions, you *miss* the gate; and not finding ready entrance, you try to force your way over the walls! Alas! They are walls which reach to heaven, and cannot be climbed! Return, return—retrace your footsteps—seek the open gate, and enter in! Believe and live!

Oh! if it be all true that Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; if it be true that his work is finished and our redemption completed, that by that work he removed the mountain-barrier of sin, that stood between us and God; if it be true that, in his infinitely precious and all-sufficient work, there is full provision made for the forgiveness of every guilty sinner upon earth, then why should any soul remain in darkness?² Is the gospel not to *all*? Are the glad-tidings not to every sinner upon earth? What says our Lord in his commission to the Apostles? “Preach the gospel to every creature”—that is, say to every creature it is for him. Do not say, they are not glad tidings to me until I am renewed. That is evident absurdity. If they be glad tidings at all, they are so whether you are changed or not—whether you believe them or not. If they be not glad tidings to you, they are not so to any. Nay, if they be not glad tidings to you, then, of course, you are bound *not* to believe them at all; and in that case you will be under no guilt and no condemnation for not believing them. And besides, if the gospel does not extend to you, neither does the law; for you can find your own name as little in the one as in the other. And it would be as reasonable to say that the law does not condemn you, because you don’t *feel* yourself to be a sinner, as to say that the gospel does not bring you forgiveness, because you do not *feel* yourself a renewed soul. If you will deny the gospel, deny the law too. If you will exclude yourself from the justifying power of the one, you may with as much reason exclude yourself from the condemning power of the

¹ Rom. x. 8, 9.

² John viii. 12; xii. 46.

other.¹ Think on this and believe the gospel! Believe and live!

But you still say, I believe that the tidings in themselves are glad, and that they ought to fill me with gladness; but still they *do not*; and how is this? Again, I say, it is just because you do not believe them, or at least that part of them which connects you with Christ—which bears upon yourself. But you say, I do believe them to be true. Do you? Then you are a pardoned sinner, a saved soul; for Scripture says, “He that believeth *hath* everlasting life.”² Nay, you reply, I have not yet reached that point. I do not yet believe the gospel so as to be saved by it. Then you really do not believe it, or at least you do not believe it to be so true that you can trust your soul upon it! You cannot trust your soul upon it till you get something more, which you call feeling, to make it sufficient to bear the whole weight of your immortality! Does not that show you that you do not believe? For then you would feel yourself perfectly safe in God’s hands—far safer in his hands than your own; and feeling *that*, you would commit your soul to him without one fear.

Now, what is it that makes a sinner feel that he is perfectly safe in committing his soul into God’s hands? It is the knowledge that God has, by his Son, accomplished a work so perfect, so glorious, so all-sufficient, that it is no longer necessary that the sinner should die; nay, that it is now *righteous* in God to forgive and bless the sinner; and that God *welcomes* every guilty sinner back to him just as if he had never sinned.³ Now that this work is done, why does not every sinner that hears it come and commit his soul to God? Just because he does not feel satisfied that the work is sufficient. He is, unconsciously perhaps, allowing some secret doubts of this kind to lurk in his mind. God declares. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” But he is not yet at one with God on this point. The moment that he comes to be at one with God in respect to the work of Christ, that moment he casts himself into his father’s arms, and is at peace! Oh, then, believe and live; believe and be at peace.

And this brings us to another view of the gospel—viz. the aspect in which it presents God’s character to us—that

¹ Rom. v. 15-21.

² John iii. 36.

³ Luke xv. 7, 10, 20, 24.

of love—pure, compassionate, unutterable love. In God's character love is an essential part, for "God is love." But, then, how shall God show his love to sinners and yet be just? The work of Christ declares this. It discloses to us the depth of God's love to man, even when he became a sinner, and now, having secured all the ends of holiness and justice by the death of his Son in the room of the sinner, he is at full liberty to let that love flow out to sinners. The blood of Christ proclaims to us how much God is *in earnest* in his hatred of sin on the one hand, and in his love to the sinner upon the other. Christ's work is the expression of God's love to sinners. It declares the infinite extent of that unutterable love. It has removed every ground of suspicion and distrust. It gives every sinner perfect ground of confidence in Him. An unfallen being cannot *distrust* God. The fall introduced an element of distrust. It was impossible that we could trust God or feel ourselves safe in his hands so long as we saw that he was under the necessity of punishing us. So long as we saw that He could neither be righteous nor holy unless he condemned us, so long we could not feel any thing but the most terrible distrust and dread of Him, and would see that our only security lay in fleeing from his presence. All this insecurity and distrust have been wholly removed by the death of Christ. God is no longer under the necessity of punishing the sinner. He is now at liberty to give full vent to his love. Nay, it is now a righteous and holy thing in him to forgive the sinner.¹ He is more glorified now in forgiving than in punishing the sinner. In his *character*, as revealed and ascertained to us in the work of Christ, there is most full and perfect ground of confidence for every sinner. All may find refuge here. Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.² To know God is to be at peace; and all our disquietude arises from our not knowing him. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;"³ that is, there is something in God's name or character which cannot be known without producing confidence. Here, then, there is full and sufficient ground of trust for sinners—a ground of confidence altogether independent of anything good in them. It is easy to see how God's nature is fitted to give confidence to all unfallen beings. But here the question is—"Is there enough in that character to warrant the confidence of those in whom

¹ Rom. iii. 26; 1 John i. 9.

² Job xxii. 21.

³ Ps. ix. 10.

there is absolutely *no good*? The gospel answers—Yes! It was for this very end that the Father sent his Son—to reveal his character to sinners; and it was for this that Jesus died and rose again, that a way might be opened up for sinners to avail themselves of that character. To all, then, this character is proclaimed as a ground of confidence, in virtue of which every sinner in the world may return to God in the most perfect assurance of a gracious and most fatherly welcome. Anxious sinner! think on this. “Hear, and *your* soul shall live.”

But it is, perhaps, asked here—“Am I to come just as I am? is this ground of confidence open to me as I am?” Yes, just as you are. “And am I at liberty to exercise confidence towards God in the first moment of my return; or am I not to wait for some more feeling, or conviction, or preparation?—must I not go and pray that I may be enabled to return; and use the means for helping this forward?” Here you ask—Am I at liberty to trust *at first*—is my *first* act to be an act of confidence? To that I answer—Most certainly. The very thing which God wants you to do, and without which every thing else is but an empty sacrifice, is to come and *trust* in him;¹ and if you are not at liberty to do so *at first*, you never can be so; for the grounds of our confidence never alter, and you have just as much ground of confidence in God’s character at this moment as you ever can have. You think it presumption to put perfect confidence in God at once, and at first. It is not so. There is no presumption in doing that which God asks you to do, and in which he delights.² Not to do so is far greater presumption; nay, it is worse, it is making God a liar. And mark this—you must either trust or distrust God; and will you dare say it is your duty to *distrust* God when you come to him? You shrink from such profanity. Then shrink from the awful guilt of not trusting God the first moment of your coming near to him.³ Again you say—“I must wait and prepare myself; use the means, and pray that I may be enabled to return.” Nay, you must not wait—you must arise and go to your Father; and as for preparation, the only preparation I know of is just believing the record which he has given you of his Son. As to *means*, the simple truth regarding Jesus and his work is the only effectual means which

¹ Ps. xxxii. 10; xxxiv. 8.

² John iv. 10. Rom. x. 11-13. 1 Tim. iv. 10.

³ Eph. i. 13; iii. 12. Heb. x. 22; xi. 6.

Scripture sets before you. As to praying that you may be enabled to trust, &c., I ask, how can you pray to one in whom you have no confidence? You must *trust* before you can *pray*. If, then, you have at this moment sufficient reason for trusting God, what should hinder you doing so? What prevents your *first* act of return from being an act of confidence? The truth is, you are not yet fully persuaded that God's character is really such as to afford ground of confidence. You want to get evidence of some change in yourself, and then you will believe this—that is to say, you want to go to God on some better footing than that of a sinner; and then you will be able to trust him, and then you expect him to recognise your newly-acquired claim. Such awful presumption! Such perversion of the gospel! To make your own character, and not God's, your ground of confidence! Will God accept this at your hands?

Oh, then, remember that the very first act of a sinner's return to God is that by which, believing all that God has declared about his love in Christ and his willingness to welcome every sinner who will return, he puts his trust in Him and says, *Abba, Father!* Here is no mystery and no mistake. God says, *RETURN!*¹ and that one word is sufficient for you, for it shows you the posture in which God is standing towards you, and it shows you that his feelings towards you are those of unutterable compassion and benignity.—What more could you have to give you confidence in God? With such evidence of his character, *how can you help* trusting him; or how could any amount of *feeling* in you give you greater ground of confidence than you at this moment possess? Whether you will believe it or not, you have already most ample ground of confidence towards God—ground which remains the same whatever the state of your feelings may be. All you have to do is to avail yourself of this, by going to him in confidence as one who no longer doubts what He has told you about himself and his Son. *Believing that testimony*, go to him as your Father—speak to him as your Father—ask of him what you will and it shall be done unto you. When, then, at any time, you lose your peace or hope, it is because you are forgetting the ground of your confidence, and letting go your hold of the testimony. And when you are seeking your way back to peace and confidence, do not begin to search for evidences of your own

¹ Isa. xliv. 22. Jer. xxxi. 12, 21.

good estate, or pore over your past acts of faith, or attempt to work yourself up into great fervour of feeling; but go simply back to the sure testimony of God regarding the finished work of his Son, and say, “Is not all this still true—still the same?—then I need not fear nor be troubled. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? still *trust* in God: return into thy rest, O my soul.”

Do not say, I *cannot* believe. Christ says ye *will not*.¹ It is your unwillingness that keeps you from believing. Do not excuse yourselves and throw the blame on God, by referring to our Lord’s words, “no man *can* come to me except the Father draw him;”² for the meaning of that is plain, as showing the manner in which our unwillingness is overcome. We must be *drawn*, for we struggle and resist. And would you say that persons must go on in profligacy, because scripture has said “they *cannot* cease from sin.”³ Do not say “I am sure I am willing”—remember, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. It is your unwillingness that keeps you from believing. If you can believe man’s word, surely you can believe God’s word, for it is the same act of mind in the one case as in the other: nay, you ought surely far more readily to believe God’s word than man’s word, for you have far better ground for believing the former to be true than the latter. When *believing* any thing, you simply ask, is it *true*? Or, in believing any person, you simply ask, is he worthy of credit? If satisfied that the person is worthy of credit, and the thing true, you at once believe it. If you know the thing to be true, whether it be spoken by God or man, how *can you help* believing it? Do you ask, What, then, keeps one from believing? I answer, many things, but chiefly these,—unwillingness—love of sin—pride, for it is a most humbling thing to have no merit of our own—love of approbation⁴—dishonesty.⁵ These are some of the hindrances. But will you dare excuse yourselves by pleading these?

But, then, if faith be so simple a thing, is it not incredible that we should get forgiveness, and life, and peace, and all the blessings of the kingdom, upon the putting forth of so simple an act? Now, does not this show that you want to make a merit of your faith—to couple so many things with

¹ John v. 40.

⁴ John v. 44.

² John vi. 44.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 19, compared with Luke viii. 15.

³ 2 Pet. ii. 14.

it as to make it somewhat deserving of such blessings? And if you couple your *feelings* to your faith, in order to give it weight, why may not another man couple his *works*? It is just *because* it is so simple, and allows no merit at all to man, that such mighty consequences hang upon it. It is evident that in making such an objection you are supposing faith to have some merit, and that you are laying such stress upon the change wrought in you by the Spirit as actually to make it part of the price of your redemption, and turning it into a self-righteous plea for acceptance with God. Now, the Spirit's work must not be confounded with the work of Christ; and yet, according to your ideas, it seems as if it were the Spirit's work, and not Christ's, that contained the gospel! Oh, then, throw yourself upon the simple truth—that Jesus died and rose again. “It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance;” *i. e.*, it is all true, and it is the very thing for you. Believe and live!

Do not say—“I am not sure whether I believe or not—whether I love or not.” If you say thus, the probability is that you neither believe nor love. And if you are *content* to remain in that state; if you say as many do—a man *cannot make sure* of these things—then you may be *quite sure* that you have neither part nor lot in the matter. What! Can you not be sure whether you believe a thing or not? Does the prisoner not know whether he has believed the tidings of his respite and deliverance? What! Can you not be sure whether you love God or not? Is it so hard a thing for us to know whether or not we love an object? Are earthly loves accompanied with these uncertainties? Does the friend not know what friend he loves, and who it is that loves him in return. Does the natural eye not feel the difference when midnight is exchanged for the brightness of the rising sun?¹ Ah! when thus you try to magnify the difficulties of making sure of salvation, is it not because ye love the darkness rather than the light? How can you have one moment's peace so long as you are in doubt whether God be your Father or not? How can you live, how can you eat, how can you sleep, so long as you are not sure whether or not you are his child? How long will you go on praying that God may become your Father, instead of at once believing his testimony and going to him in confidence as your Father? It will not do. There can be no

life in religion, no liberty in God's service, no repose of spirit, till *Abba, Father*, is the joyful utterance of the lip—the natural and spontaneous breathing of the heart!¹

We say not these things to cause any one to despair. Oh no! but for the very opposite end. It is to bring every doubting, troubled spirit, at once to peace, by shewing him where that peace is to be found. Weary sinners! here are glad tidings for you! There is but a step between you and life! This very moment you may enter into peace! This very moment you may come and say *Abba, Father!* All things are ready, and you are welcome! Your Father seeks you: He has no pleasure in your death: He is in real earnest when he asks you to turn and live. His interest in your welfare is sincere and deep. Oh, then, return and be at rest! *Believe* what he has told you about the finished work of his Son, and arise and go to him—enter again your forgotten home, take your place at the table, and rejoice with them that rejoice over you—“This our brother was dead, and is alive again—he was lost, and is found.”

Ho, ye that are afar off—wandering in misery through the waste howling wilderness—return, return! The storm is rising—the last, fatal storm—and where will you find shelter? Here is the refuge from the storm and the covert from the tempest—in the finished and accepted work of Immanuel.² Place yourselves beneath this precious covert! Here is the paternal wing stretched out—oh flee, flee to its shadow, that you may be sheltered there! Oh, ere that wing be folded up, and all who have taken refuge beneath its ample stretch, be gathered up along with it—ere the covert be withdrawn and you left unsheltered amid the approaching storm—ere grace be gone and wrath begun—oh, flee, flee to the everlasting shelter of the all-protecting wing! “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.”

¹ Rom. viii. 14, 15. Gal. iv. 5-7.

² Is. xxv. 4; xxvi. 20; xxxii. 2. Matt. xxiii. 37.

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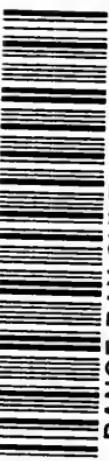
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